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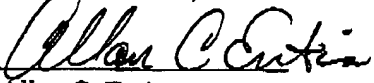
moots applicants' traversal thereof and reverts to rejecting the claims, for a third time, under the old Bleeker-Cheng §103(a) rejection.

From the prosecution history it appears that the Examiner feels that the present Office Action returns prosecution of the application back to where it was after the second Office Action. However, the rejection made in the Second Office action and the identical rejection repeated in the present office action was traversed in the response to the second Office Action filed by the applicants on February 7, 2002. The traversal was never addressed by the Examiner in the subsequent history of the prosecution but was mooted when the Examiner abandoned the rejection in favor of the new Bleeker-Cheng-Smit rejection. As a result, the present office action does not bring prosecution back to where it was after the second Office Action but *to where it was after applicant's un rebutted traversal of the Bleeker-Cheng rejection.*

Applicants therefore submit that repetition of the Bleeker-Cheng rejection in the present Office Action is untenable unless accompanied by a rebuttal of the applicants' traversal thereof and that if such a rebuttal is not forthcoming, that the claims of the present application are patentable over Bleeker in view of Cheng.

An action on the merits is respectfully awaited.

Respectfully submitted,
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